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Travel Montana

UPDATE

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Travel Montana TIIPs Its Hat to Five Communities

Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program

The Rialto Community Theatre in Deer Lodge, the Blaine County Wildlife Museum in Chinook, the Billings Preservation Society in Billings, Friends of Savenac in Haugan and the Twin Bridges Historical Association in Twin Bridges will invest $200,000 in tourism "bed tax" funds into infrastructure projects in their communities.

Governor Marc Racicot approved these five tourism-related projects for the $200,000 in available infrastructure dollars from the Montana Commerce Department's "bed tax"-financed Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIIP).

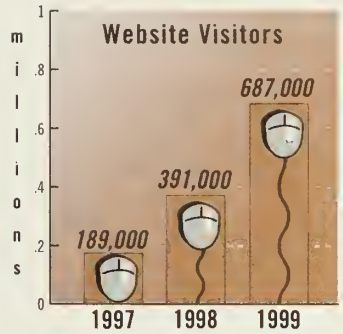
The addition of these five projects brings the total TIIP investment to Montana's tourism-related infrastructure to $1.219 million for 23 projects in 18 Montana communities since the program was initiated in 1995.

The following is a summary of 1999/00 TIIP projects and "bed tax" funding:

- $73,677 to the Rialto Community Theatre for lighting and electrical improvements to the interior and stage area of the 1921 Beaux Arts-style 700-seat theatre in downtown Deer Lodge.
- $61,600 to the Blaine County Wildlife Museum for final building repairs and improvements along with professional design and development of the museum's wildlife displays and exhibits.
- $24,000 to the Billings Preservation Society, Inc./Moss Mansion for reconstruction of a carriage house visitor center.
- $20,361.50 to Friends of Savenac's Historic Savenac Nursery for an updated sewer system to allow for year-round use of the facility.
- $20,361.50 to the Twin Bridges Historical Association for the renovation of the historic Reid Building.

Surfs Up

Just three years ago Travel Montana began to aggressively develop and market its state-of-the-art World Wide Web site visitmt.com. The site is rapidly gaining popularity. For the eight-month period of January through September, the number of visitors has grown from 189,000 in 1997 to 687,000 in 1999. Travel Montana expects to host more than one million website visitors in 1999.



"The web has proven to be a cost effective way to spread timely travel information to Montana's residents and visitors," says Travel Montana Director Matthew Cohn. "The web plays a crucial role in Travel Montana's marketing efforts." Cohn adds that the Electronic Media staff will continue to use cutting edge technology to enhance the site.

Statistics from a 1998 Better Homes and Gardens Family Travel Vacation Report estimate that 25% of family vacationers used the Internet to get information on places to go on vacation.

Travel Montana's Consumer Marketing Manager, Suzanne Elfstrom, explains that the average time a person spends cruising visitmt.com has increased by 75% from 1997 through 1999. Users spent 13.3 minutes on the site in 1999 compared to 7.46 minutes in 1997.

Just a Click Away

- *Travel Montana's 1999-2000 Tourism and Film Marketing Plan is available electronically on Travel Montana's Tourism Industry Intranet site travelmontana.state.mt.us/marketingplan.*
- *Interested in what other communities across the state are doing to prepare for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial? Need a speaker for your next L&C function? Check out montanalewisandclark.org.*

Think Snow

To get a jump on the in-state ski market, Travel Montana is running spots on Montana Power Company's new "Sport Montana Live" cable television promotion. The spots will remind Montanans that there is great skiing in their own backyards and will direct viewers to the skimt.com website or Travel Montana's 800-VISIT-MT (847-4868) number to receive skiing information and money saving package offers.

Travel Montana, Department of Commerce, Matthew T. Cohn, Travel Director
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Have We Got a Lead for You

Travel Montana's Group Tour Specialist, Marlee Iverson, recently attended the Affordable Meetings Exposition in Washington D.C. and the Incentive Travel & Meeting Executives in Chicago. Marlee reports that she received a good number of leads from meeting planners who are interested in the incentive travel markets, business marketing or corporate retreat markets. She had requests for meeting locations that included golf, horseback riding, whitewater rafting and skiing. If you are interested in these leads please contact Marlee at 444-4107 or e-mail marlee@visitmt.com.

All Aboard: Welcome Vicki Munson

Vicki Munson has joined the Travel Montana staff as the new Cultural Tourism Specialist. Vicki comes to Travel Montana following three years as the executive director of The People's Center in Pablo, one of the cultural facilities and programs offered by the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes.

Montana Indian Tourism Alliance Discussion Underway

Forty-five representatives from Montana's seven Indian reservations met in Billings October 7-9 to discuss the formation of a state Indian tourism alliance. The Montana participants heard from Wisconsin and South Dakota Indian alliance members about the workings of their tourism organizations. Another planning session is scheduled for the Fort Peck Reservation November 19-20.

Montana Film Office Production Activity

Commercials

Dodge - Big Timber, Bozeman, and Livingston areas

Nissan - Lewistown

Pontiac Montana - Big Timber area

Anti-smoking PSA - Roundup, Billings

Still Shoot

L.L. Bean catalog - Livingston and Bozeman areas

Television

Restore America, various locations

Battle of the Little Bighorn - Hardin area

Video

Children's Educational Video - Great Falls area

Thought You Might Want to Know

- The Lewis and Clark Festival, June 22-25, 2000 in Great Falls, was named as one of the Top 100 Events in North America for 2000 by the American Bus Association.
- Missoula was recognized as a "Great American Place" by *American Heritage* magazine and as one of the "Best Communities in the West" by *Sunset* magazine.

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Calendar of Events

November

6-10	NTA Nashville, TN
11-13	Showcase USA - Milan, Italy
14-15	RMI sales seminar - Brussels, Belgium
16	MTRI L&C Focus Team - Helena
19	Regions and CVB meeting - Helena

December

4-8	American Bus Association Marketplace
7	MTRI Working Group Meeting - Helena

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